

Q. Why are only residential customers eligible for this program?

A. Residential accounts vary seasonally due to lawn sprinkling, the filling of swimming pools, and the number of people in the household. Historically, commercial and multi-family (apartment) accounts do not vary much seasonally. If they are sprinkling, they generally have separate meters so that their sewer rate is affected only by domestic, or inside, usage. As well, the occupancy factor of multi-family accounts affects monthly usage and makes it difficult to accurately measure consumption for each household.

Q. Wouldn't it be more equitable to just meter my sewer?

A. No. It would be extremely costly to the City of Arlington as well as to its customers to meter sewer. Sewer meters are expensive to buy, expensive to maintain and not as accurate as water meters. Usually, metering sewage is reserved only for large commercial or industrial users and then those accounts are reviewed on an individual basis to determine if it is cost effective to do this special type of metering. There are only a handful of sewer meters used within the City of Arlington currently.

Q. Why was this program implemented?

A. It is a more equitable system for billing sewer to residential customers. Each customer's sewer billings are "customized" to match their usage patterns.



Q. What program was in place prior to this one?

A. Up until 14 years ago, residential customers had a maximum sewer flow of 9,000 gallons each month. All customers had the same maximum (which was based on the city wide average of residential customers) regardless of what their individual household was putting into the sewer system.

Q. So how can this program help me save money?

A. Keep your water usage as low as you can during the winter months. Remember that watering your lawn or shrubs or filling a pool will all affect your winter water usage and ultimately your maximum sewer charge for the year. If you suspect you have a leak in a toilet or your sprinkler system, they should be repaired immediately.

Reminder...

We print a reminder message about this averaging program on your bills each year. The message will give you the approximate dates during which water consumption you use will be averaged to determine your maximum sewer charge.

The highest month's consumption of the December through March billings will be discarded before the averaging is completed. If you wish to take advantage of the lower sewer charges, you should be conservative with your water usage during this time.

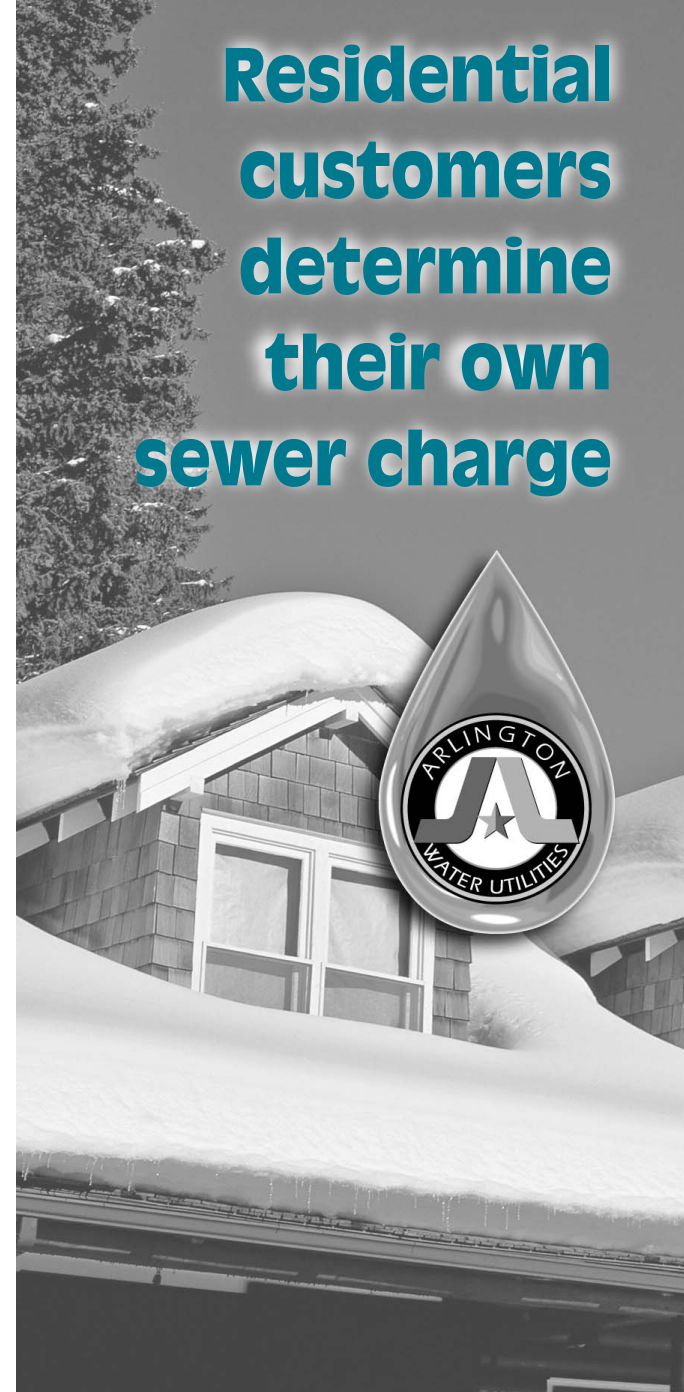
Call us at 817-275-5931 and we will be glad to assist you with this or any other questions you have about your maximum sewer charge or your account in general.



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Residential customers determine their own sewer charge



All of us should practice water conservation every day. In addition to preserving a valuable natural resource, conservation helps reduce cost for everyone. With lower water usage, the water system (from where Arlington receives its raw water) does not have to be expanded as often. As well, the Arlington Water Utilities Department pays less for sewage treatment which translates directly back to our customers. During the winter months, residential customers can take another opportunity to be conservative with their water usage and it can translate directly into savings for them! Specifically, each year during the winter months, residential customers will automatically have their monthly water consumption averaged to establish a maximum sewer charge that the customer will have for the next 12 months. This program has been in place for 14 years.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. How exactly do you average my winter months' usage?

A. We take the water consumption shown on your December, January, February and March billings, discard the highest month and average the remaining three months to establish the maximum sewer charge that will be used from April of that year through the following March. (Because we bill 20 times each month, some customers receive their December billing in early December, while others receive it at the end of the month. Customers should watch their individual bills beginning in October for a message indicating the approximate dates that they will be affected.) If, for example, water usage was 10,000 gallons in December, 15,000 gallons in January, 8,000 gallons in February, and 6,000 gallons in March, the new average is 8,000 gallons or 8, as it displays on the bill. The January bill of 15,000 gallons would be discarded because it is the highest of the 4 months and the remaining December, February and March billings would be averaged.

Q. Why do you average only 3 of the 4 winter months?

A. Lawn sprinkling, entertaining guests during the holidays, filling a swimming pool or hav-

ing a toilet leak, for example, can all increase a monthly bill. Being able to discard the largest of these bills prior to averaging the 3 remaining months gives a more accurate measure of water going into the sewer system.

Q. Once I have my average, does this mean I will be charged this same amount every month?

A. It is a maximum charge. This means you will not be charged more, but you could be charged less. If, for example, your maximum is 8,000 gallons and you use 15,000 gallons of water, you will be charged only 8,000 gallons for sewer. But if you use 5,000 gallons of water, you will be billed for 5,000 gallons of sewer. Your sewer flow will not be higher than your water consumption.

Q. Once I have my average, will it ever change?

A. Your average will be recalculated each year when we average your December through March bills. It could go up, go down or stay the same. It depends on how much water you use during those months.

Q. How can I find out the approximate period during the winter months that I need to be conservative?

A. The geographic location of your account determines approximately when you will be billed each month. During the months of October through February, a message will display on the back of your bill providing the approximate dates during which water consumption will be used for the averaging. It is during this time that you should be conservative in your water usage if you wish to take advantage of a lower sewer charge.

Q. Why do you use the winter billing months for averaging?

A. Traditionally, the 4 lowest consumption months for residential customers are billed in December, January, February and March. The primary reason for this is residential customers are not watering their lawns and water usage is inside the house. This generally means that the majority of the water used is going down the sewer.

Q. What is my average if I am a new customer and do not have the winter months' history?

A. Each year, we average all residential customers' consumption to establish a city average. Every residential customer who does not have a full December, January, February and March billing will receive the city average until they have the history to establish their own. The current city average is 6,000 gallons.

Q. Do you still read my water meter monthly?

A. Yes. We must read your water meter to determine how much water you should be billed for in a given month.